

## Whatever Happened to Idol Worship?

The first two commandments...

<sup>2</sup>"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. <sup>3</sup>"You shall have no other gods before me. <sup>4</sup>"You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. <sup>5</sup>You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God...

I wonder if you've ever pondered the question: Am I an idol worshipper?

Of all the ten commandments, the second one may seem the most irrelevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. After all, we live in the sophisticated, enlightened, educated western culture. They may do that in the primitive rainforest of Brazil, the hot sub-Saharan parts of Africa, or some remote backward islands of the pacific, but certainly no Christian would do so in America. We are enlightened, we are educated, we have nice churches to go to...so

**I wonder if you've ever considered: Am I an idol worshipper?**

### ***What is worship?***

**It is appreciating or enjoying the worth or value of some object.**

*It is acceptable to appreciate the worth of fine art, heroic feats, and quality relationships.*

**What you worship supremely, what becomes the center of your focus, what dominates or controls your perspective of life.**

**What you worship supremely, what becomes the center of your focus you will...**

- Adore
- Sacrifice for
- Submit to
- Seek after
- Hope in
- Serve
- Give to
- Speak about
- Look to for peace, meaning, and happiness
- Spend a great deal of thoughts, time, energy and resources on

*Sometimes boyfriends or girlfriends can do that.*

## **What is an idol or a “god?”**

A “god” or idol can be someone or something that is perceived to meet your needs, satisfy your desires and longings, bring joy, a feeling of delight or pleasure, assurance, comfort, peace, release, meaning, value, or escape from hardships of life. Some gods remove guilt, or help you get through the day.

***An idol is anything that we consistently make equal to or more important than God in our attention, desire, devotion, and choices.***<sup>1</sup>

*The first commandment is about worship: You shall have no other gods before me.*

*(They) worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever, Romans 1*

*There will be terrible times in the last days. <sup>2</sup> People will be ... lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God— <sup>5</sup> having a form of godliness... 2 Timothy 3:1ff*

## **What do they look like?**

The Bible speaks of false gods of wood and stone, but also of the other kind:

*“Guilty men, whose own strength is their god” Hab. 1:11*

*I have put my trust in gold or said to pure gold, ‘You are my security,’ Job 31:24*

*24 No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money. Matthew 6:24*

*“Their god is their stomach,” Phil 3:19*

I wonder if you’ve ever pondered the question: Am I an idol worshipper?

## **What are some common 21<sup>st</sup> century idols or gods?**

What are some 21<sup>st</sup> century gods? Some find security and release in liquor. Their tranquility and peace is at the bottom of an empty glass. Others find their release, their delight, their pleasure in Ben and Jerry’s *Death by Chocolate* Ice Cream or at the bottom of a bag of Peerless Potato Chips. After all, it’s what brings pleasure after a difficult day. The god of youth or thin is very popular. Some people think they would be happy and satisfied if they look younger, or if they could be thinner. Some clothes hounds worship the idol of latest fashion. Maybe they can’t afford everything, but they long for it. I know some people who find joy and satisfaction

<sup>1</sup> Stuart Scott, *The Exemplary Husband*, p. 91.

in having everything in its place; they worship the God of “perfection,” the god of order. Some people worship their fantasies: In your fantasy world, everything is as you want it. That world, at least for awhile, brings satisfaction and enjoyment. Many people worship the god of pleasure—pleasure in any form. Some workaholics worship the god of work: this god can bring a sense of achievement; he is perceived to satisfy a deep craving of accomplishment. Sometimes young people worship the god of popularity or approval. They do foolish things to gain the approval of others, because that’s what brings them enjoyment and pleasure. People think that these things will ultimately satisfy.

*Some of these things aren’t wrong in themselves. They are wrong if they are desired, pursued and longed for in the place of God.*

### ***What are some other idols that can be worshipped?***

Control

Power

Wealth

Pleasure and comfort

Children, loving spouse, happy home

Significance, success

Trouble free or pain free life

Promotion at work, school, sports team

### ***How can you tell?***

I wonder if you’ve ever pondered the question: Am I an idol worshipper?

Are you seeking for delight in something other than your relationship with your creator?

Do you regularly find your delight in anything other than God?

*After a busy day, do you come home and relax in front of the TV?*

*Are you an internet addict? Have you ever realized as the sun comes up that you have been surfing the ‘Net or IMing your friends all night?*

*Does your job bring ultimate satisfaction?*

What happens when the object of your delight in is removed? One test we find is this: Are you willing to sin in order to get what you desire, or do you sin in how you handle not getting what you desire?

*How do you respond when you don't get what you want? When life is unfair? Are you sad, angry, hateful, bitter, fearful, resentful, discouraged, bitter, blue, spiteful, or depressed? Do you sit in front of the TV and become absorbed in the world of Hollywood? What do you do when your "god" doesn't satisfy? Do you clam up, pout, blow up, storm out of the house, or plan to get even, hit someone, or break something? Do you fail to do something you should have done? Do you grumble the rest of the day? Do you fail to fulfill your responsibilities or obligations?*

James 4:1-4

*What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? <sup>2</sup> You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. <sup>3</sup> When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.*

## What should you do?

### Understand the tragedy of pursuing that which cannot satisfy

<sup>13</sup> *"My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.*

Four things need to be stressed:

*Only a personal relationship with God satisfies and brings delight*

Psalm 16:2: I said to the LORD, "You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing."

Psalm 27:4: 4 One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.

Psalm 36: <sup>7b</sup> Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow of your wings. <sup>8</sup> They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights.

Psalm 37:4: Delight yourself in the LORD...

Psalm 63:1-7: 1 O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. 2 I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. 3 Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. 4 I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. 5 My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods...

I wonder if these verses reflect your lifestyle?

**Other Gods are inferior****Other Gods are not dependable**

They are deceiving, self-serving and self destroying

*...they mingled with the nations and adopted their customs.<sup>36</sup>  
They worshiped their idols, which became a snare to them.*

*3 Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him. 4 But their idols are silver and gold, made by the hands of men. 5 They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see; 6 they have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but they cannot smell; 7 they have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but they cannot walk; nor can they utter a sound with their throats. 8 Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them.*

**Other Gods will ultimately lead to sorrow**

<sup>4</sup>The sorrows of those will increase who run after other gods.

**Genuinely repent of your sin—that's not as easy as it seems.**

James 4:7-10: ...Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."<sup>7</sup> Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.<sup>8</sup> Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.<sup>9</sup> Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom.<sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

**Vigorously pursue a renewed relationship with your creator**

Hebrews 11:6

...without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

*You gotta' believe this*

*You gotta' pursue this*

***I wonder, have you ever asked yourself: Am I an idol worshipper?***